AN ATTEMPT TO RESIST

I wired an appeal to all regiments at the front. That same night the All-Army Committee of Soldier Representatives convened at the headquarters of the Supreme Commander in Mogilev and passed a resolution protesting against the mutiny of the Petrograd garrison. It called on the army committees to support the government and the Council of the Republic. All fourteen army committees met the next day; twelve passed resolutions against the upheaval in Petrograd, while two declared that the army on the front should not interfere in political affairs. Unfortunately, the dissenting resolutions stemmed from the First and Fifth Armies, both on the Northern Front. We could count only on the Twelfth Army.

I tried to reach the Iskosol by direct wire, but the line was dead. By noon I received a message from Kharash: The Lettish Tirailleurs had tightened their siege of the Iskosol's quarters and cut its direct communications with the army and Pskov. The soldiers might arrest the members of the Iskosol at any time. Now the Twelfth Army was also out.

There remained only units in the general front reserve not allocated to any of the three armies. After negotiations with such regiments and companies, I found that actually only the Third Cavalry Corps would respond to our appeal. The corps consisted of fifty squadrons ("hundreds" in Cossack regiments), with machine gunners and light artillery attached to them, and included, in all, about ten thousand men. Many of these, however, were dispersed on guard service at munitions depots, railways, communication centers, and the like. Only eighteen squadrons were available for immediate action.

I called General Krasnov on the direct wire, told him about the situation, and asked whether his troops would respond to the appeal of the All-Russian Executive Committee. He replied that he was confident of his men. He had received a similar request from Petrograd signed by Kerensky two days earlier. The telegram was very confusing, however, and since it had not been confirmed by Cheremissov, his direct superior, he had decided to disregard it. Now he would start preparations at once. He remarked that not much could be done with the forces at his disposal, but he hoped other units would join the task force in the course of the operation. The essential thing was to start. "Orders are under way," he concluded.

I wired to the War Ministry and Mogilev: "Preparations are being made to move units of Third Cavalry Corps toward Petrograd." And I asked Mogilev to supply reinforcements. The Ministry inquired